



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

JAN 06 2010

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

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Paul Labovitz
Superintendent
National Park Service
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area
111 Kellogg Boulevard East, Suite 105
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

**Re: Comments on the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Disposition of the
Bureau of Mines Property, Twin Cities Research Center, CEQ No. 20090427**

Dear Mr. Labovitz:

In accordance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA), we have reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Bureau of Mines Property, Twin Cities Research Center Main Campus, Hennepin County, Minnesota.


This property was closed in 1996 when the President and Congress closed the Bureau of Mines. The eleven abandoned buildings and infrastructure on this site subsequently deteriorated and have become environmental and safety concerns. This FEIS proposes a Preferred Alternative for the disposition of the 27-acre site to provide for its restoration and maintenance.

EPA provided comments on the project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), recommending Alternative D be designated the Preferred Alternative to assure a more comprehensive approach to site remediation plans, including remaining hazardous materials. Alternative D could also promote historic preservation and consideration of culturally important resources to Native Americans and other groups through all proposed remediation efforts. We commend the National Park Service for specifying Alternative D as the Preferred Alternative in the FEIS and recommend the Record of Decision (ROD) designate this as the action to be taken.

We noted that the DEIS generated a large number of comments regarding the culturally important resources of this unique property (e.g. Coldwater Spring significance to Native American groups and Fort Snelling historic roles). Because the Alternate D provides considerable flexibility in the eventual disposition of the site, we recommend the ROD clarify how these future decisions would affect the status of these resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the FEIS for the Disposition of the Bureau of Mines Property. Should you have any questions regarding these comments, please feel free to contact me or Norm West of my staff at 312-353-5692 or west.norman@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth A. Westlake", written in a cursive style.

Kenneth A. Westlake
Chief, NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance